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"Montani Semper Liberi"

Andrew Price, Editor

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MANHOOD.

He stands the test where souls are tried
And true honor finds;
Who conquers manfully, the pride
That rules in feeble minds;
Who seeks not rest in life's career,
Nor yet beyond the grave;
Whose heaven is duty's nobler sphere
—Not that which idlers crave.

He covets not the Lordling's place,
Nor vainly strives to scan
The Master's mind, but asks for grace
To do the best he can.
His peace not torpor of the soul,
But harmony within—
Renouncing self to reach the goal
And triumph over sin.

Once on the plow his hand he lays
His eye ne'er backward turns;
Fortune he seeks in virtue's ways,
Ill-bought success he spurns.
Looking his fellow in the face
He sees God's image there;
Whate'er may help to lift the race
His hand is quick to share.

Meekly he takes life's daily tasks
As part of Heaven's great plan;
This boon—ought else denied—he asks
To be a manly man.
Angels attend on such an one,
And stars their courses move
To light his pathway to the throne
And garnish it with love.

John Troland, in The Springfield Republican.

About Alaska.

Mr Andrew Price,
DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 20th instant received a few days since. I will attempt to comply with your request.

I left Seattle on January 17th, 1898, and landed at Dyea on January 24th. We sledged our outfit to Lake Bennett; from Dyea to the summit of Chilcot Pass is about twenty miles, all up hill, the last half-mile almost perpendicular. From the summit to Lake Lindeman, the first of the chain of five lakes that you pass through in going down the Yukon, is ten miles; from the head of Lake Lindeman to the head of Lake Bennett is eight miles. The Canadian Custom House is located on the summit of Chilcot Pass, where they commence to rob every one that enters their territory, and they do not let up until you leave their possessions. We crossed the summit March 24th. We worked at the summit, packing, part of February and the first twenty days of March and the big snow slide that killed about sixty persons at Sheep Camp occurred on the 3d of April.

We built our boat on Lake Bennett about twenty miles from the head of the lake. There have been so many boats built along the lake in the last two years that timber is very scarce. It is 550 miles from the town of Bennett, which is at the head of the lake, to Dawson. The ice was all gone from Lake Bennett by May 25th, but it did not leave Lakes Tagish and Marsh until June 1st.

We started down the lake on May 30th. All the boats were inspected at Tagish House, which is located at the foot of Lake Tagish, where the mounted police did some robbing. You had to have your customs receipt signed by the inspector and the boat inspected by a policeman, who also put his initials on the receipt; and if you would not pay the policeman anything he would be so busy that he could not examine a boat; but if you would give him a dollar or two he would have time to walk two or three miles to inspect the boat and if it was too far to go, he would sign the receipt without seeing the boat. There were boats along the lake for about four miles. All the boats were numbered. They commenced at Bennett with number 1 and at Tagish House with number 10,000. Our boat was 12,286. I saw a boat numbered 16,870, and also one 18,847, so you see there were nearly twenty thousand boats built on the lakes last spring.

Six miles below Lake Tagish is Lake Marsh; then comes the Sixty Mile River, on which is Miles Canyon and the White Horse Rapids, about half way between Lakes Marsh and Lebarge. The canyon is about half a mile long, the walls are solid rock and nearly one hundred feet high, the river is about thirty or forty yards wide in the canon; the rapids are about three miles below the canon. The river for about half a mile above the rapids is very swift. The river narrows at the rapids to about twenty yards and the fall is four or five feet. There were several boats wrecked and two men were drowned the day we passed through. We did not get a bucket of water in our boat. There were three of us in the boat.

Lake Lebarge is the last and largest of the chain of lakes, the outlet of which is the Thirty-mile River, a very dangerous piece of water on which several boats were wrecked last year. The Thirty-mile and Hootalinga rivers form the Lewes River. The Big and Little Salmon rivers empty into the Lewes from the north, about thirty-three and seventy miles, respectively, down the river. At Ft. Selkirk the Lewes and Pelly form the Yukon, which is a large and wide river, but is full of islands and sand-bars. One hundred and six miles below Selkirk the Stewart is a large river, navigable for nearly two hundred miles, and like all the rivers in that country is very swift. We ascended it about one hundred and seventy-five miles to the mouth of Mayo Creek, a creek about the size of the Greenbrier River, which we ascended about sixty miles. About seven miles from the mouth of the creek we found a cabin that was built in 1896. On the inside was a piece of bark on which was written the days of the months commencing August 25, 1896, and ending March 31, 1897. There was a mark through all the days to and including March 29, which day I suppose the occupants left the cabin. Opposite November 20 was written, "Lost the sun," and opposite January 15, "Found the sun." I suppose they did not see the sun between those dates.

The country adjacent to Mayo Creek is full of small lakes, some of these a mile long. It was in one of these lakes that I killed the moose. About 3 p. m. we reached the top of a ridge and saw a lake about one-quarter of a mile away. The moose was feeding in the farther end of it. The water was about four feet deep and he was feeding on something in the bottom of the lake. I crawled around the bank until I was within one hundred yards of him and shot him. The bull went about fifty yards right to the opposite bank and fell where the water was about two feet deep. The meat of the moose is very tender. We could not use much of it. The weather was warm and we were about twenty-five miles from the mouth of the creek. We could not get the meat to our boat, so we gave away what we could and left the balance for the wild animals. The horns were in the velvet. There were seven large prongs and the shovel on each beam. It was the first live moose that I ever saw, but the next day we saw a bull, a cow, and a calf in a lake and could have killed one or probably all of them had we wanted. The moose were not very wild, but game was not as plentiful as I expected to find it in a country where there is so little hunting. We saw plenty of bear sign and a few wolf tracks, but never saw a bear.

The country in places was open and there was plenty of grass, something like red top. On one mountain peak that we climbed there could have been cut tons of hay, but there was no way to get it to a market. We saw quantities of wild currants, that were just as large and had as fine a flavor as any I ever saw in a garden; there were also huckleberries; there were plenty of strawberry vines, but I saw no berries. I saw plenty of cranberries, and most of them grew on the tops of the hills, not in swamps as they do in West Virginia. There were a good many fish in the rivers and creeks. There were about fifteen hundred people up the Stewart River last year, but there was no gold found to amount to anything.

We arrived at Dawson about the 20th of August. Dawson is located at the mouth of the Klondike River. The business part of the town is level; it is about a mile long up and down the Yukon; there are some very large log buildings there, three stories high. The Alaska Commercial Company, North American Transportation & Trading Company, The Alaska Exploration Company, and the Standard Oil Company. Each have large warehouses and stores, and there are a number of smaller stores. There are about twenty saloons and gambling houses, about a dozen hotels and bunk houses. Flour sold for \$16 per cwt.; corn meal, \$25 to \$30 per cwt.; oatmeal, 30c per pound; dried fruit, 30c per pound; bacon, 40c; sugar, 50c; coffee, \$1.00; tea, \$1.25; evaporated potatoes, 50c per pound; fresh potatoes and onions, 75c per pound; all canned fruits and vegetables 50c per can; canned meats, 75c and \$1.00; maple syrup and honey, \$6.00 per gallon; coal oil, \$1.50 per gallon; candles, \$5.00 per box (120 candles); oats 25c per pound, and hay \$200 to \$300 per ton.

The hills around Dawson are covered with the cabins of miners and prospectors. They claimed there were about twenty thousand persons in and around Dawson in December. The Klondike is a little larger than the Greenbrier is at Marlinton; the current is swift and the water is clear. The water is muddy in most of the streams in that country. There is a foot-bridge across the Klondike at Dawson and it costs twenty-five cents to walk across it. The same company has a ferry about three miles up the river, and they charge fifty cents to take a person and one dollar to take a horse across. The company that owns the bridge and ferry have a franchise from the government, and no one else can put a ferry on the Klondike. The Government will sell all the timber for twenty-five or thirty miles on a stream to an individual or company for a nominal sum, and then if any one wants the timber they have to pay the individual or company an enormous price for it. Last summer you had to pay to get your mail or to get into the Recorder's office, and you could get no information after you got in except what the clerks chose to tell, no outsider could see the books, although it purported to be a public office. The Government robbed the people in every way.

Bonanza Creek empties into the Klondike about two miles from Dawson, and Eldorado empties into Bonanza sixteen miles from Dawson. These are the two richest creeks in the country. Some of the bench claims off of Bonanza and Eldorado are very rich. The bench claims are the claims on the sides and tops of the hills. Mining licenses cost \$10 per year and it costs \$15 to record a claim. In the Canadian possessions the \$15 has to be paid every year—it is only a lease. There was a great deal of sickness and a good many deaths in and around Dawson last year. A man saw a Swede digging a grave and he asked him who was dead, and the Swede replied: "I tank I sell him." He was digging graves on speculation, expecting to sell them when someone died, and generally they did not have long to wait.

The great trouble with that country is that there are too many people there for the work there is to do. There are ten men, for every position there is to be had, and a great many of the men are absolutely broke. There will be a great deal of gold brought out this year, but nearly all of it will come from Bonanza and Eldorado creek. If a person is making a living in a civilized country I would advise him by all means to stay at home, for he is running great chances going into that country; he does not know the hardships he will meet. In the summer time the mosquitoes and gnats will almost eat you up. It does not get dark at all in June or July, and the mosquitoes bite all the time. There is more work done at night in the summer than in the daytime, on account of it being cooler. In the winter time you will almost freeze. The mercury was down to 50 degrees below zero in Dawson before I left, and it was 60

below at Fort Selkirk as I came out. The majority of the people in that country live worse than a good dog does in Pocahontas Co.

A man by the name of James English and myself left Dawson on January 16, 1899. We came to Skagway in twenty-three days. On the trip we would stop at the road houses, which are located on the river from fifteen to thirty-five miles apart. Some of the road houses are situated so that it is too far to make the distance between two in one day, and to only make one is not a good day's travel. Meals cost from \$1.50 to \$2.00, and they were poor meals at that, and bunks cost \$1.00, so it cost us \$4 or \$5 each every night, so we could not afford to spend any extra time on the trail. We had to stop over two days on account of storms and one or two days we were only able to make fifteen or twenty miles on account of the trail being filled with snow. We made fifty miles a day. The distance from Skagway to Dawson is nearly six hundred miles, so you see it is a pretty long walk when the thermometer registers from 20 to 60 degrees below zero.

I would advise any one in Pocahontas county who has the Alaska fever to wait a year or two before they start, for you do not know the hardships that are before you.

I remain yours truly,
E. D. McCLINTIC,
SEATTLE, WASH., March 31, 1899.

His Plea.
When other lips and other hearts
Their tales of love repeat,
Just send the ring I gave you back
And I'll stay on my feet.
—Chicago Daily News.

County Sketches.

THE WITCH.
John Brand in his work on Sorcery and Witchcraft "divides witches into three classes; of which the first, powerful to hurt but not to help, is appropriately called Black; the second, of directly opposite quality, helpful but not hurtful, is called White; and the third, potent as well to help or to hurt is styled Grey."

In the year 1840, matters were in a very bad shape in the vicinity of Hickory Hollow. The community was plagued with witches. Axes would break when sunk by a stroke into the wood; spinning-wheels would turn as heavily as if they weighed tons; rifle guns would send their balls flying in eccentric circles and the families would go hungry for meat; cows gave bloody milk; dogs would bark at night and then hide under the house in a perfect agony of fear; fences fell down at night from some unknown cause, and Squire Harmon's spring which was the clearest and best water in the country ran muddy for several days and then became clear again.

These things did not happen to everyone. There were families in the neighborhood who had not been disturbed in anyway, and this showed clearly that the witches were at work, for those who were not inconvenienced were simply favored by the witch, while those who had suffered were the objects of the witch's spite.

All the circumstances pointed to an old woman, known as Old Mag, who lived in an old log cabin hid in a dark, piney ravine. She depended upon the charity of the neighbors. She had lived there some years, and no one knew where she had come from, or what was her history. The folks were not long in coming to the conclusion that she had been driven thither by the wrath of the people who had previously suffered from her malignant practices. She had appeared, gained permission to occupy a deserted tenant house, and been supported by the charity of the neighbors. She had a wonderful knowledge of medicinal properties of many of the plants, and she had been in great demand among the ailing women who looking for medical advice depended greatly upon her teas and various preparations.

Old Mag had been a welcome visitor and after it was established beyond any question of doubt that

she held the destiny of others in her power as a witch, she was treated even more kindly than before, however much she was feared and dreaded in secret. But it became so that a visit from her meant to the house some calamity to be immediately sent upon it. She sat by the fire at Godwin's for a while one day and she had just reached the top of the hill when she turned and looked towards the house. Just then the back wall of the fire place exploded and threw the fire all over the room.

She came to see the Lynch's and went away down the path that led through the timber. When she had been out of sight a few minutes a wolf came out of the timber and killed a sheep. The good wife saw it and while it was lapping up the blood that flowed from the wound in the throat, she squealed to frighten it away. Presently it trotted away and disappeared behind a tree top which lay across the path. Just then Old Mag came in view around the tree top, returning to get her spectacles which she had forgotten.

Thomas Skaggs was hunting one day with his rifle gun which had been recently spelled. He had bored a hole in an oak tree and filled it with salt to take the spell off the gun, and started hunting once more. He had hunted a little while when he saw a wild turkey. He shot at it and hit it in the head. He was delighted to find that the spell was off his gun. True, he had aimed at the butt of the wings, but the head was the proper place to shoot a turkey, and a spelled gun would not kill. On the next mountain he came on a fine doe feeding. He fired at her, but the game took no notice of the shot. He loaded and fired again and again until finally the doe laid back her ears, opened her mouth, gave a shrill scream and rushed at him. He turned and ran. Having dropped the turkey he was afraid to return and get it. As he was hurrying home in the next hollow he saw Old Mag gathering herbs and petting the wild deer which gathered around her. He hurriedly left the woods and that whole season never ventured into its shelter again, but worked for men while they hunted for his winter's supply of meat.

The Skaggs' owned the house where the old woman lived, and they suffered more than any one else. One spring the corn they planted did not come up. Good fat cows would be unable to stand. The ewes were barren. There was much sickness in the family. Finally John Skaggs consulted Abe an aged free negro who was supposed to know something of the black art. He was advised never to give the witch anything. He laid this injunction on his family. When Old Mag came next to his house he and his wife were away from home. His children clustered in the house for their dread of the witch was very great. The old woman asked for tobacco, a little coffee, a few scraps of bacon, and every conceivable thing which might be freely given, but she was denied. Then the old woman left, apparently, and the children creeping fearfully forth saw her hunting about and saw her find an iron wedge which she embraced, kissed and crowded over. She attempted to conceal it in her dress to carry away, but the oldest girl very courageously made her put it down, and the old woman went away moaning and shrieking.

For a month or so the Skaggs noticed no signs of supernatural agencies and the guilt of the old woman seemed fully established. Then the troubles at the Skaggs grew worse than ever. Nothing went right and the Skaggs family fingers were all thumbs. In short they were bewitched. It was a very serious matter. John Skaggs moulded him a bullet from a silver coin and waylaid the old woman and shot at her. "Did you hit what you shot at, John?" grinningly asked the old woman. It is needless to say that Skaggs slunk away badly beaten. It was said by the neighbors that the bullet could not have been pure silver, or the

pure would have been effective.

A few days afterward at a log rolling in the neighborhood the citizens discussed the evil that had come upon them. Abe, the free negro, was present and was an authority on all matters of witchcraft. His advice to Skaggs and the effect it had showed conclusively that it had something to do with it. Abe's idea that Old Mag prowled around picking up what she could find and then venting her wrath in a fiercer manner. The shooting of the witch was discussed, but Abe protested vigorously. The proper plan was, if the witch came on the premises of any of the citizens she should be caught and beaten thoroughly and sent away. To this the men agreed, pledging themselves to carry it out, come what might.

A few days after this Old Mag toiled slowly up the steep ascent to Thomas Skaggs' house. The family saw her coming and were in a panic. Skaggs took an ox goad and met her at the gate. He seized her and beat her cruelly. The blows fell mercilessly on the frail old woman's back and shoulders, and she howled vigorously. When she was released and sternly told to go, she looked at her persecutor with a glance that made him quail. She said: "You have played with death. You will live to see your flesh rot off your bones."

Not long after this a fire broke out in the woods. It was a warm, sunshiny day just as winter was breaking. The woods had become dry and the fire burned fiercely. When the woods are fired, then the settler knows what it is to work against time. Skaggs worked frantically and he finished making a path and setting a fire to meet the advancing forest fire just in time. Then consumed with the heat of the fire, blackened with smoke and wearied with his exertions, he threw himself into a snow bank, a remnant of a mighty drift, such as may be seen in the mountains weeks after the snow generally has disappeared. He wallowed there with the utter disregard of a mountaineer of the rules of health.

He was taken down with blood poisoning. Great ulcers broke out upon him and the nearest medical man who was brought for forty miles could not relieve him or give his disease a name. One day in dressing his sores he saw the bones of his leg. He remembered the words of the witch and told his family what she had said; he never spoke again.

Then Godfrey O'Brien, who had been brought through a long fever under the treatment of Old Mag, and who felt that he owed her his life, went to see the old woman, and being an exceedingly frank man asked her this question: "Granny, are you a witch?"

"Yes, I am what the people call a witch, my son."

"Have you bewitched the Skaggs and the other people around here?" Then the old woman told her story:

"No, I'm no black witch. Black witches have their power direct from the evil one. They can do nothing but hurt and hinder. They are always fighting me. You have been good to Old Mag, let her tell you what has been going on. I am a white witch. They have only the power to help and not to hurt. If there is anything black witches hate it is white witches. They have no power over them. Where I lived before there was a black witch. She was a young woman, belonging to a wealthy family and very beautiful. But she was a black witch. She worked her evil spells wherever the suspicion might fall on me. That was the only way she could injure me.

"I got the credit of all her work. Just as has happened in this neighborhood all the evil was laid at my door. The men came and burned my house. We are not able to overcome fire, I came here, and black witches took the same plan with me. I completed the ordeal and have the power now to hurt, and am a grey witch and have a spell working for my tormentor which will give me peace and end the troubles of the people. The

Concluded on last page.